**Follow The Leader – Week 1 (SEEKS)**

**October 21/22, 2017**

What’s up everybody? I am so glad you are here today. We are starting a brand new series today that will focus completely on leadership. We are going to be looking at the Bible and some real-life examples of what it means to be a godly leader.

There are MANY situations in life where we have to rely on the expertise or leadership of someone else. How many of you have ever taken a trip/tour and you had some sort of a guide? Ok…a few of you. Well, I want to tell you a story about the best tour guide I know!

**(Leader’s Note: Share a personal story here about a time where you had to follow someone’s lead on a trip/tour/excursion. Try to really emphasize their knowledge and expertise in a humorous way if possible!)**

For the next two weeks, we are going to look at 2 characteristics or words that I think describes a godly leader. I know there are probably many more, but we’re going to focus on two of them. So, we are going to jump right into our THP for today!

**THP: A godly leader SEEKS God with their whole heart.**

When you want something, you could say that you have a strong “desire” for it. The definition of the word “desire” is “a longing or craving for something that brings satisfaction or enjoyment.” Here’s an easy example of this definition…have you ever been hungry? Like REALLY hungry? Maybe you’ve been on a really long car ride, you’ve been working outside, or just had practice…and you are famished! You are so hungry and you just find out that your parents just ordered or are going out to eat to get your FAVORITE FOOD IN THE WORLD!

Now let me ask you something…would that food have sounded as good if you had been full? Some of you are like, “Of course!” In all likelihood, it wouldn’t be as strong if you had already eaten a lot of food beforehand. When you desire something that strongly, it’s because you feel empty. You need something to make you feel satisfied.

There’s a story in the Bible about a guy named Matthew. He was a tax collector…not exactly the best job in the world. In fact, NO ONE liked tax collectors! However, Matthew gets the opportunity one day at work to meet Jesus. I’m sure he had heard of Jesus before, but he had never met him or seen him. Matthew actually wrote the first book of the New Testament and he talks about that experience. Check it out in Matthew 9:9-13:

*“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*

The tax collectors all wanted to spend time with Jesus…in spite of the fact that they were doing all of these terrible things. However, the Pharisees, who are the religious leaders, are upset that Jesus is spending time with them. You want to know why Jesus was spending time with them…**because they were hungry. They had a desire for God. Why else would they be eating with Jesus? Maybe they thought he could satisfy them in a way they had never experienced before.**

If you want to become a good leader, you need to be hungry. You need to seek God with your whole heart…even when you don’t feel like it! We’re not always going to FEEL hungry all of the time, but the reality is that we are just like “the sick” that Jesus talks about. Only Jesus can make us better. Only Jesus can satisfy us. Jesus is the ONLY one worth seeking. Are you doing that in your life?

I think seeking Jesus is like having the desire for your favorite food all the time. You know what I mean? It’s like knowing the only thing that can make you feel fulfilled, satisfied, and truly joyful in this life is to know and love God! I heard a pastor tell me one time, “Christianity is about one thing: it’s about helping people find their way back to God.” Even when you feel far away from God, you can still seek Him and find Him! Isn’t that awesome?!

John 6:35 says, *“Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

**I have a couple of questions that I want you to think about to yourself…you don’t have to answer them out loud. How hungry are you for God? Just like our THP for today said…are you seeking Him with your WHOLE heart or just SOME of it?**

Godly leaders seek God with everything that they have! Even when they mess up or make mistakes, they continue to ask God for help. Leaders aren’t perfect…they’re hungry; they have a desire; they seek help from the only place that can truly give help…AND THAT’S GOD!

**Our THP says, “A godly leader SEEKS God with their whole heart.” Are you seeking God with your whole heart? Do you have personal relationship with Him?**

Some of you today may want to take the first step and commit to following Jesus for the rest of your life. I mean, if you want to be a godly leader, then you need to know this God personally and receive His gift of grace into your life and commit to follow Him, serve Him, and worship Him! If you’ve never done that before, I want to give you that opportunity today.

**Let’s close in prayer: I want everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes so we won’t be distracted by anything. If you are here and you want to become a Christian…you’ve never made that decision before…I want you to repeat this prayer silently to yourself and to God. Say, *Dear Jesus, thank you for saving me. I know that I have done things that are wrong in my life. I can’t live this life on my own. I need You. Please forgive me of my sins. I commit to follow You for the rest of my life. Thank you for loving me no matter what. I place my faith and trust in You and You alone. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.***

If you just said that prayer for the first time, this is your first step as a new follower of Christ. That is awesome! It is the best decision that you will ever make! I want you to do three things for me if you made that decision…

-Tell someone (family, friends, leaders)

-Get a Bible (if you need one, let your leader know and we can get you one!)

-Get baptized during the next baptism service

If you ever need someone to talk to, all of the leaders are available to listen to you and help you in

any way that we can. Love you guys! Let’s go to our group discussions!